

Leominster and Wigmore Rural
District

HEREFORDSHIRE

ANNUAL REPORT

on the

STATE of the PUBLIC HEALTH

for the Year

1949

Staff of the Public Health Department

Medical Officer of Health M. J. PLEYDELL, M.C., M.D., D.P.H.

Clerk MISS S. DENSHAM
(Resigned on 31st May, 1949)

G. PROSSER
(Appointed on 1st June, 1949)

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To the Chairman and Members of the Leominster and Wigmore Rural District Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1949, which has been compiled in accordance with the Ministry of Health Circular 2/50.

During the year thirty-two permanent brick houses were built, and work was carried out in the Shobdon area on the conversion of Ex-R.A.F. property huts into family dwelling accommodation, and the utilisation on a temporary basis of some of the neighbouring huts. It is advisable that the huts in which no alterations have been made should be used only as an emergency measure. This construction should help to alleviate the present acute housing shortage but the demand for accommodation is still enormous, and a true assessment of the situation must take into account those houses which, though structurally sound, are found to be grossly overcrowded. High rentals mean that Council houses are available only to a proportion of the population; and past experience has shown that the money is often drawn from household funds normally appropriated to food and clothing, and that deterioration of health ensues. This is a matter worthy of consideration in the future.

A fresh water supply is now available at Leintwardine, a new well having been sunk not far from the pump house. When a filtration plant has been installed and other necessary works carried out, this chlorinated supply should be adequate in quality and quantity for future needs.

An outbreak of measles occurred in the course of the year, a total of one hundred and eighty-five cases being notified. Both age and seasonal factors, however, were favourable and no deaths were reported from this infection. Twenty-one cases of scarlet fever were notified, most of which occurred at the beginning of the year. The incidence did not assume an epidemic form; the cases were scattered; and no one source of the infection was discovered.

The care of the aged is a problem which will claim more and more attention in the forthcoming years. At present it is estimated that there is one person over working age (65 years) for every six persons of working age, and it is expected that this proportion will increase to one in four or even one in three in the next quarter of a century. District Councils are responsible for the housing of old persons and there is little doubt that this problem will present many difficulties in the forthcoming years. It is advisable, therefore, to anticipate the needs of the future and plan accordingly as far as is possible.

The prevention, treatment, and care of persons suffering from tuberculosis is at present under the control of three separate bodies: the District Councils, Regional Hospital Boards, and County Councils respectively. Better unification of control is required in order to combat this serious infection.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Sanitary Inspector for his very considerable help and co-operation throughout the year.

M. J. PLEYDELL,

Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A.—STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area in acres)	94,101
Population (civilian)	10,440
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1949) according to the Rate Books	3,204
Rateable Value	£47,948
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£188 0 0

EXTRACT FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR:

	Total	Male	Female
LIVE BIRTHS (Legitimate)	161	83	78
(Illegitimate)	19	8	11
Total	180	91	89
STILL BIRTHS (Legitimate)	6	4	2
DEATHS	136	76	60
DEATHS FROM PUERPERAL CAUSES	—	—	—
DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE (Legitimate)	5	2	3

COMPARABLE DATA FOR ENGLAND AND WALES, 1949:

Birth rate (per 1,000 of the estimated resident population)	17.2
Birth rate for England and Wales	16.7
Still Birth rate (per 1,000 of the estimated resident population)	0.57
Still Birth rate for England and Wales	0.39
Death rate (per 1,000 of the estimated resident population)	13.0
Death rate for England and Wales	11.7
Infant Mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	27.8
Infant Mortality rate for England and Wales	32.0

SECTION B.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

LABORATORY FACILITIES

Laboratory facilities continue to be available at the County Public Health Laboratory, Hereford, which is under the administration of the Medical Research Council.

CLINICS

There are no clinics provided by the Local Authority.

Under the County Council and Regional Hospital Board schemes the following Clinic facilities are available to residents in the district:

Child Welfare Centre: In the annexe at the Leominster Cottage Hospital, every Friday, 2—4 p.m.

Venereal Diseases: At the County Council Hospital, Hereford, on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Orthopaedic After Care Clinic: Organised on a voluntary basis and held at the Hospital annexe.

The schemes also provide for Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics, Paediatric, Ear, Nose and Throat, and Eye Clinics. Children are referred to these Clinics as and when required, on the recommendation of the School Medical or Infant Welfare Authority, or at the request of the Medical Practitioner.

In addition a minor ailments clinic for school children is held twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays from 10—11 a.m., at the annexe at the Cottage Hospital. The object of this clinic is to give treatment for minor medical conditions before they develop into anything more serious and require the time and attention of the child's own doctor. It is thus preventive in nature. The clinic also serves a useful purpose in that regular supervision can be maintained over children with defects—such as visual and orthopaedic defects—and is thus of assistance to the Education Authority.

I am indebted to Mr. G. E. Bull, Sanitary Inspector to the Council, for the following Statement (Section C. to E) furnished under Sanitary Officers (Outside London) Regulations.

SECTION C.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE AREA

WATER SUPPLIES—Leintwardine.

During the year the old pipe line from the spring head at Leintwardine was found to be broken across the river, and water was therefore polluted by river water. A new well was sunk within the vicinity of the pump house, and the supply proved to be plentiful. Chlorination is still being carried out, and samples taken and sent for analysis are fairly satisfactory.

An inquiry was held in November regarding Leintwardine water supply by an official of the Ministry of Health. The official recommended that a filtration plant together with other works to remedy any possible surface pollution be carried out.

A further new pump has been installed in the pump house, of greater capacity and a reasonable supply for the village is being maintained.

WATER SAMPLING

128 samples of water were taken and sent to the Laboratory for analysis with the following results: 56 satisfactory and 72 unsatisfactory. The major part of the district is served by wells, only a few parishes being favoured with a piped supply.

Wigmore	...	...	62 houses on standpipe.
Adforton	...	...	25 houses on standpipe.
Brampton Bryan	...	...	24 houses and school on main supply.
Leintwardine	...	...	122 houses and school on mains.
Kinton Supply	...	...	10 houses on standpipe.
Whitton Supply	...	...	11 houses on standpipe.
Pump House	...	...	7 houses on standpipe.
			Outside pump house.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE

Sewage disposal is much the same as in previous years. A Ministry of Health inquiry was made regarding the condition of Kingsland sewer, but owing to the cost of the scheme the matter was deferred.

RIVERS AND STREAMS

No pollution was reported during the year.

REFUSE COLLECTION

House to house collection throughout the district is carried out by the Local Authority and this is working satisfactorily.

DISINFECTION ON ACCOUNT OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Forty-six inspections and re-inspections were made in connection with infectious disease and disinfection was carried out at 22 houses and one school.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA

Inspections have been made under various Acts and Orders including the Factories Acts, and under enactments governing meat and foods.

Inspections under	Number	Informal Notices served	Statutory Notices served	Notices Complied with
Housing and Public Health Acts	380	130	—	107
Factories	54	6	—	5
Milk and Dairies Orders	323	20	—	24
Bakehouses	24	4	—	4
Food Premises	231	3	—	3
Schools	2	—	—	—
Water Supplies	128	27	—	24
Infectious Diseases	46	—	—	—
Knackers Yard	19	1	—	1
Hop-pickers' Quarters	24	3	—	3
	1,231	199	—	171

FACTORIES

Fifty-four inspections have been made at the factories with and without mechanical power in the district. The factories without mechanical power are small, generally only employing two or three persons. Five informal notices were served for minor defects. On the whole the regulations are carried out satisfactorily.

INSPECTIONS UNDER THE FACTORIES ACTS, 1937

Premises	Number on Register	Number of Inspections	Number of written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
1.—Factories in which Section 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	6	18	—	—
2.—Factories not included in 1, in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	14	34	4	—
3.—Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises)	1	2	1	—
TOTAL	21	54	5	—

Cases in which defects were found:

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found			Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred To H.M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	4	4	—	—
Overcrowding (S.2)	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)	—	—	—	—
(a) Insufficient	1	1	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	—	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to out-work)	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	5	5	Nil	Nil

NOTICES ISSUED

Informal	...	...	...	...	...	199
Statutory	...	...	...	...	...	Nil

DEFECTS REMEDIED

The following list relates to major defects only, which were remedied, or in connection with which repairs were carried out:—

Roofs	...	...	...	53	Pantries Provided	...	...	11
Dampness	...	...	...	22	Stairs Repaired	...	...	12
Floors	...	...	...	19	Windows Repaired	...	...	15
Drains	...	...	...	49	Baths Fitted	...	...	6
Wells	...	...	...	32	Septic Tanks Constructed	...	...	23
New Sinks Fitted	...	...	...	18	Conversion of Privvies	...	...	7
Spouting Repaired	...	...	...	18	Wash Coppers Repaired	...	...	7
Plastering Repaired	...	...	...	19	Chimneys Repaired	...	...	26
Dangerous Walls	...	...	...	13	W.C.'s Provided	...	...	21
Cooking Accommodation	...	...	...	13	W.C.'s Repaired	...	...	1
Pumps Repaired	...	...	...	7	Doors Repaired	...	...	10

CAMPING SITES

There are no registered camping sites in the district. Some camps were used by organised parties to help with the harvest. They were inspected and no nuisance occurred. Where camping does occur, it is only for a short period.

SECTION D.—HOUSING.

Number of Council Houses built by the Council in 1949 were:—

Permanent, brick: 32. Temporary: Nil

The number built by private persons were:—

Permanent, brick: 13. Temporary: Nil

INSPECTIONS OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR

- (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under the Public Health and Housing Acts 171
- (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose 380
2. Number of dwelling houses found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation 136

ACTION UNDER STATUTORY NOTICES DURING THE YEAR

Proceedings under the Public Health Acts:—

1. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied Nil
2. Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after the service of formal notices:—
 - (a) By Owners Nil
 - (b) By Local Authority Nil

VAN DWELLINGS

There are several dwellings in the district. Most are located in Abbey Lane, Leintwardine, and are of the permanent type, having their own water supply and drainage. They are mostly overcrowded on present standards and require dealing with as soon as possible. There are other Vans scattered throughout the district which on the whole are fairly satisfactory.

SECTION E.—INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Regular inspections were made at the various food shops in the district. Three notices were served for limewashing and these were complied with.

FOOD CONDEMNED AS UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

Tinned Meat	...	...	6 lbs.	Butter	...	...	...	92 lbs.
" Vegetables	...	...	4 lbs.	Jam	...	...	...	4 lbs.
" Milk	...	...	20 lbs.	Cheese	...	...	...	18 lbs.
" Fruit	...	...	68 lbs.	Bacon	...	...	...	91 lbs.
" Margarine	...	...	24 lbs.	Meat	...	...	...	248 lbs.
" Soup	...	...	10 lbs.					

Central Slaughtering is carried out in the Borough of Leominster Slaughterhouse.

SECTION F.—PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

MEASLES. One hundred and eighty-five cases of measles were notified this year as compared with one hundred and ninety-eight last year. Approximately three quarters of these cases occurred in the second quarter of the year, and only four infants under one year of age were infected. Both age and seasonal incidence were favourable and no case fatalities resulted.

Only twelve cases of whooping cough were notified during the year; but isolated cases of scarlet fever cropped up as "dropping" cases without any suggestion, apart from family contact in one or two instances, of any inter-relationship. The majority of cases occurred in the first three months of the year and were, presumably, merely an indication of widespread haemolytic streptococcal infection.

ANALYSIS OF TOTAL NOTIFIED CASES, ACCORDING TO AGE

DISEASE	AGE OF PATIENT														Total
	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-10	10-15	15-20	20-30	30-40	Over 40	Unknown	
Measles ...	4	18	13	15	21	25	13	34	28	4	4	2	4	—	185
Whooping Cough ...	—	2	2	3	1	—	1	1	—	—	1	—	1	—	12
Scarlet Fever ...	—	1	—	2	2	5	1	5	3	1	1	—	—	—	21
Pneumonia ...	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	2	—	8
Acute Poliomyelitis ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Erysipelas ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	6	2	11

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

The following figures are presented through information supplied by the County Medical Officer.

Number of children at 31st December, 1949 who had completed a course of immunisation at any time before that date (i.e. at any time since 1st January, 1935):

Age at 31.12.49	Under 1	1	2	3	4	5-9	10-14	Total under 15	Estimated mid-year child population 1949	Under 5	5-14	Total
i.e. Born in year	1949	48	47	46	45	40-44	35-39					
	1	75	99	122	89	582	529	1497	932	1533	2465	

These figures indicate that 41.4% of the child population under five years of age has been immunised against diphtheria as compared with 39.4% at the end of 1948. 72.5% of the child population of 5-14 years has been immunised against diphtheria as compared with 62.5% at the end of the previous year; while 60.7% of the children under 15 years of age has been protected against diphtheria by immunisation.

TUBERCULOSIS

At the end of 1949, the Tuberculosis Register contained the names of forty-four males and twenty-seven females who normally reside in the district.

During the year, eleven new cases were notified, nine on account of Pulmonary Tuberculosis, and two because of the presence of the disease in parts of the body other than the lungs.

During the same period, three deaths of persons suffering from the disease occurred, three persons recovered, and four left the district.

CAUSES OF DEATH (all ages)

DISEASE	Males	Females	Total
Tuberculosis (of the respiratory system)	1	1	2
Other forms of Tuberculosis	—	1	1
Cancer (all forms)	10	15	25
Diabetes	1	—	1
Intra-cranial vascular lesions	12	10	22
Diseases of the Heart and Arteries ...	29	22	51
Bronchitis, Pneumonia and other Respiratory diseases ...	4	3	7
Diseases of the Digestive system ...	1	1	2
Nephritis	4	1	5
Prematurity and congenital conditions at birth	2	1	3
Violence	5	2	7
All other causes	7	3	10